

IN THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

Raised Bill 1068  
Wednesday, February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2007

Testimony of Ms. Jennifer L. Bucci, USMC-Veteran, AU Advocate  
Whiting Forensic Division  
351 Silver Street  
Middletown, Connecticut 06457

Good Day, Madam Chair and Honorable Members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Jenifer Bucci. I am a **Honorably** discharged Veteran of the United States Marine Corps, with seven years of service. I have an Associates Degree in Human Services. I am an Advocacy Unlimited Graduate, as well individual in recovery at Whiting Forensic Division (WFD) of CVH, in Middletown. I would like to Thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony on Raised Bill 1068.

The following statement , details my objection to the proposed new Legislation pertaining to our **CONNECTICUT PATIENT BILL OF RIGHTS**, Gen. Stat., § 17a-548. As an Acquittee, committed under the jurisdiction of the Psychiatric Security Review Board, the matter of property rights is of great significance. As an Acquittee, we are under the custody of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. The average length of confinement of Acquittees in Connecticut is **16 years**. Nationally, the average is **4 years**.

I am opposing the proposed legislation by DMHAS for the following reasons: The right to hold and convey property is a fundamental constitutional right. As DMHAS clients, at WFD are not prisoners. The average cost of "Treatment", at WFD is \$800.00, to \$1,400.00 per day, per person. My question to you is-if you have a Treatment Facility where the taxpayer is paying Millions of dollars to treat individuals with psychiatric disabilities, why would someone want to ruin the **PATIENT BILL OF RIGHTS**, and make a Prison out of a Hospital?

The amount of taxpayer waste is tremendous. Clients are supposed to be housed for treatment, yet the average client repeats the same groups, year after year. No one ever investigates the Treatment needs of each individual. Often, the Treatment Plans are the exact copies of the previous ones. My opposition to the proposed bill comes with a request that the Division Director work with the clients of Whiting Forensic Division to gain a resolution without changing any laws. If only the Division Director would visit the units and talk to clients, he would know that the clients are for the most part taking great pride in their property. Often times, spending the little money they have to make themselves happy. Recovery should be the Division Director's focus and not restrictions, punishments! Kindly, I am requesting that you strike down the proposed legislation and that you promote the **CONNECTICUT PATIENTS BILL OF RIGHTS**. Please continue to protect the rights of individuals with psychiatric disabilities.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony.